

Teaching Toward Justice:

An Intro to Social Justice Studies @ Harper



The Making of Social Justice Studies (SJS): A DEI Story

- Social Justice Leadership Certificate project proposal (Fall 2018)
 - A justice-oriented leadership development opportunity for students.
- Student Groups, ERGs, and Faculty Senate call for change (Summer 2020)
 - Connecting curriculum with community needs.
- Social Justice Studies Task Force (Spring 2021)
 - Goal: “to ensure students were leaving with a better understanding of social justice through an aligned curriculum” ([ILEA Equity Plan](#), p. 32).



SJS Task Force Proposal

1. SJS Graduate Distinction Framework

- Harper College (Global Scholars and Honors)
- Oakton Community College, Lake Forest College, Roosevelt University, DePaul University, Northern Illinois University, & Northeastern Illinois University

2. SJS Faculty Coordinator

- Market, Manage, & Expand SJS Distinction

3. SJS Advisory Council

- Support the work of the Coordinator and oversee SJS curriculum development



What is Social Justice Studies? Applied Knowledge

The SJS Graduate Distinction is:

- General education coursework addressing social problems and solutions; open to students pursuing any major.
- A scholarly exploration of interdisciplinary and intercultural approaches to understanding injustice and achieving justice.
- Designed to engage students in an ongoing dialogue about the meaning of social justice and in an exploration of the most compassionate, equitable, and inclusive practices and strategies for achieving more just societies.
- A chance to explore how our individual identities, cultural backgrounds, and chosen disciplines situate us in relation to systems of power and privilege.



SJS Options and Requirements

Three ways to engage:

1. SJS Exploration - complete one or more SJS courses
2. SJS Transfer Distinction - complete all required coursework
3. SJS Graduate Distinction - complete coursework + capstone project

Graduate Distinction Requirements:

- Grade of C or better in 12 credit hours of required coursework
- Minimum Cumulative GPA of 2.0
- Design, execute, present a Capstone Project



Required Courses

9 out of the 12 required credit hours must come from the following required social justice course sections:

1. English – Composition I or II
2. Diversity in the US
3. Social and Behavioral Science



Course Redesign

A Commitment to Enhanced Learning:

- Inclusive Content, Design, & Accessibility
- Equitable Assessment & Grading Practices
- Diverse Classroom Culture & Pedagogy



SJS Learning Outcomes (Sample)

Students will be able to:

- Demonstrate an awareness of *the social nature of justice and injustice...* (Core Outcome)
- Situate themselves and their academic and professional work within a larger *historical legacy of justice workers and liberatory movements.* (Supplemental Outcome)
- Develop and demonstrate, via inquiry and experiential learning, an informed and critically defensible stance in relation to a social justice and equity issue by:
(a) Addressing the effects of social institutions or cultural exchanges upon underrepresented groups; and/or (b) Participating in concrete efforts to address social injustice. (Capstone Outcome)



SJS Faculty

SJS curriculum developed in AY21-22:

- 9 course sections
- 7 instructors
- 7 departments
- 4 academic divisions



SJS Pilot Students

Reaching across equity gaps:

- **66%** Minoritized Students
- **40%** First Generation
- **46%** Pell Eligible
- **1/3** One Million Degrees & Ignite Scholars

Data provided by Institutional Research



Looking Forward



SJS Online

- Email: socialjustice@harpercollege.edu
- Website: <https://www.harpercollege.edu/academics/social-justice/index.php>

